Lauri A. Schmid-Snoeck March 15, 2010

Ed. 702.22 Seminar in Applied Theory & Research 1

Dr. Sharon O’Connor-Petruso

Wiki Assignment #2 & 3 – Revised & Updated Annotated Citations

Topic: “Why Doesn’t Teacher Call on Me?” The Impact of Implicit or Inadvertent Teacher Favoritism in the Classroom.

Berry, D., & O’Connor, E. (2010). Teacher-Child Relationships, and Social Skill Development across Middle Childhood: A child-by-Environment Analysis of Change. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 31*(1)*,* 1-14. Abstract retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov> database. (Accession No. ERIC #: EJ869961)

In this peer-reviewed article, the authors, of Harvard University and New York University, respectively, studied ‘the growth trajectories of children’s social skills from kindergarten through sixth grade, and to investigate the roles of early behavior problems and teacher-child relationships [in which] the magnitude of the effect increased as children aged’, using data from a National Institute of Child Health & Development study of Early Child and Youth Development.

This article substantiated the fact that students who had “higher-quality teacher-child relationships had a positive effect on children’s [social skill growth] trajectories.” While those “who experienced *low-*quality relationships…showed comparably much less positive growth and more dramatic negative growth in the late-elementary years.

Butterman, E. (2007). Playing Favorites? *Instructor, 116*(6)*,* 39-41. Abstract retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov> database. (Accession No. ERIC #: EJ792935

This article from the Scholastic magazine Instructor. Mr. Butterman describes what favoritism looks like and offers strategies and ideas to avoid preferential treatment.

This is a non-peer-reviewed magazine. In the article, several anonymous teachers reflect on their classroom management styles that have been identified as playing favorites with students. These behaviors became apparent to the teachers either through their own reflective process or as a result of student/parent complaints. As result of recognizing their favoring tendencies these teachers have made efforts to address them and shared solutions: “Ask a trusted co-worker to observe you on “favoritism watch”;…find something special about every student…[something] that makes them shine;…I have each student write his or her name on a large tongue depressor…and use them whenever I call on student to respond, to read aloud, and to give their opinions; alternate between calling on boys and girls;…

Who are the favorites for these teachers? “BUSY BEES: …smart and work hard;…CLASS CLOWNS…quick wit…make me laugh;…GIRLS...I try to pass the message on [that they can be anything they want to be];…STRUGGLERS…the ones who struggle so hard to learn…”

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Daniels, H., Creese, A., Hey, V., Leonard, D., & Smith, M. (2001). Gender and Learning: Equity, Equality and Pedagogy. *Support for Learning, 16*(3), 112-116. <http://web.ebscohost.com.ez-proxy.brooklyn.cuny.edu:2048/ehost/pdf?vid=3&hid=15&>

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Daniels et al try investigate how to “treat all children equally fairly”(112). It is believed that recent efforts to address boys’ underachievement (see Davies 1999) “appear to be counter-productive”(112) and, while “It is well established that boys and girls are not treated in the same way…we need to be flexible in our response to diversity, rather than offering fixed solutions under the name of equality”(112). They also ask, “which pedagogy suits who best?...that is, …how children are transformed by their classroom experiences”(114).

The peer-reviewed article goes on to say that “’To treat people as equals may require that they not be treated the same way’ (ibid p.4). However, it is essential that they be treated fairly…girls…needs may be being ignored”(113).

One of the ways that boys get more teacher attention, which may or may not be construed as favoritism, is due to the different ways in which the genders learn and participate in activities. According to Davies et al, “males are encultured…to learn alone or under the guidance of the teacher…[if they do not] become self-sufficient learners or[they] seek other means of bidding for attention, which are often disruptive…unlike girls who are more likely to engage with peer in dialogue concerned with learning”(113).

One outcome of the study was “where collaboration is supported and fostered by both the school and teacher, is associated with low levels of gender difference in attainment”(115). The authors have some recommendations “to advance…boys’ educational achievement…do several things at once based on a complex awareness of differences between genders and differences within genders”(115) For example, because of learning styles, “They [boys] need lessons in cooperation…teachers need to offer explicit teaching on how to collaborate through active interventions (e.g. Mercer et al., 1999).

Davies, J. & Brember, I. (1999). Boys Outperforming Girls: an 8 –year cross-sectional study of attainment and self-esteem in Year 6. Educational Psychology, 19(1), 5-16 [http://web.ebscohost.com.ez-proxy.brooklyn.cuny.edu:2048/ehost/ pdf](http://web.ebscohost.com.ez-proxy.brooklyn.cuny.edu:2048/ehost/%20pdf)?vid=7&hid=15& sid=748495d8-9949-4d6f-88a1-0a59bdd377b1%40sessionmgr13

The article reports on a cross-sectional study of 1488 (737 boys, 751 girls) 9 year old elementary students in Britain to ascertain if or how a student’s self-esteem effected mathematical and reading attainment. In public examinations, girls were “gradually pulling ahead to outperform boys at the age of 16(Powney, 1996)”(5-6).

“self-esteem is affected by how positively he or she is viewed by peer, teachers, and parents (Lawrence, 1982)”(6), and, “There is much evidence to link self-esteem to achievement, and correlation coefficients between Lawseq [a standardized test]”(10). Boys outperformed girls in math, but girls did better in comprehension. However, two groups in the study took the National Test where the result “follows the national pattern in that girls are scoring better than boys”(11).

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The article also mentions that teachers “are in a powerful position to be able to influence a child’s self-concept, they should consider adopting policies and practices which promote their pupils’ feelings of self-worth…Girls have lower self-esteem than boys”(13). The authors indicate that D. Lawrence’s new book, Improving self-esteem in the Classroom, offers suggestions that may be helpful.

Egan, T. M., Cobb, B., & Anastasia, M. (2009). Think Time. *Journal of Staff Development,30*(4) 40-2, 44-5. <http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com.ez-proxy.brooklyn> cuny.edu:2048.hww.results.getResults.jhtml?\_DARGS=/hww/results/results\_common.jhtml.33

When, in “2006, the Vermont Department of Education partnered with Educational Testig Service to host Keeping Learning on Track (KLT)”(41), the St. Johnsbury School, a middle school in Vermont, adopted the new strategy. It required a “whole-school emphasis”(40). Teachers have embraced the program. Students are taught to respect one another, support each other and look to each other as a resource for learning, and be responsible for their learning. Teacher learning communities meet once a month and the time is protected and supported by the school’s administration and board. Teachers ““share what is most effective, but maybe it’s more important to share what’s not working, because you can get help from other people.””(41). Most importantly, the changes in content and practice have resulted in “increased student achievement in standardized test scores across all subject areas and grade levels…[with] overall gains in all content areas for all groups”(44).

This effort seems to be connected to Daniels et al article in that students have been taught to behave and cooperate in a way that supports learning, cooperation and collaboration. Teachers are supported in trying new, “research-based formative assessment theory and …[are provided] with practical techniques for integrating [them]…into their daily instruction”(41).

Gallagher, K. C., & Mayer, K. (2008). Enhancing Development and Learning through Teacher-Child Relationships. *Young Children, 63*(6), 80-87. http://web.ebscohot.com.ez-proxy.brooklyn.cuny.edu:2048/ehost/pdf?vid=68&hid=2&sid=476aa9d4-1ba9-4838-9f18-002efa5b027e%40sessionmgr10

Dr. Kathleen Gallager is an assistant professor at the School of Education, University of North Carolina with over 15 years in early education. She is now focused on teaching and research about children’s social relationship skills. Dr. Kelley Mayer is an assistant professor at the College of Charleston in South Carolina. Her research involves teacher-child relationships and early literacy development.(80)

In this peer-reviewed article the authors state that “How to be in a relationship may be the most important “skill” children ever learn.” The article offers strategies that can be used to support teachers and help them “develop and sustain high-quality relationships”(80) such as “respond to children’s needs appropriately and in a timely manner…[have interactions that are] gentle…take frequent opportunities to interact face-to-face…support…problem solving, allowing children to experience success without too much or too little assistance(Bredekamp & Copple 1997)…assessing the children’s instructional needs and offering support”(81).

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As far as favoritism, the article points out that “Culture and ethnicity are associated with differences in aspects of children’s relationships with teachers. For example, some studies report that teachers feel closer to White and Hispanic children than to African American children (Saft & Pianta 2001); Hughes & Kwok 2007)”(81). As in other articles, this affirms the importance of good teacher-child relationships as to its affect on how children relate to others as well as behave in a “less aggressive” manner…(Howes, Hamilton & Matheson 1994)”(82). Less aggression requires less negative teacher attention. More importantly, “Teachers who have high-quality relationships with children help children to focus their attention and interpret their emotions (Howes & Hamilton 1992). Sensitive and responsive teachers assess children’s learning styles and use that knowledge to meet children’s instructional and social needs (Hamre & Pianta 2005)”(83), [and] “have better school achievement, better social skills, and fewer behavior problems in first grade and throughout elementary school (Hamre & Pianta 2001; Pianta & Stuhlman 2004)”(84)

Egan and Mayer, in writing for early grades, suggest that teachers have ample time to communicate individually with the students as this will help “better assess the children’s needs…[and provide] children opportunities to ask questions and express ideas in a safe space…”(85). Another method of connecting with students is to include them in family conferences to assess achievements and set goals(85), and look for other opportunities to engage the students outside the classroom i.e. playground, lunchtime and afterschool events.

Haydon, T., Mancil, G. R., & Van Loan, C. (2009). Using Opportunities to Respond in a General Education Classroom: A Case Study. *Education and Treatment of Children, 32*(2)*,* 267-278. doi: 10.1353/etc.0.0052

This is a peer-reviewed article. Mr. Haydon is affiliated with the University of Florida, Mr. Mancil is an Assistant Professor with the University of Central Florida.

While the article references children at-risk for emotional or behavior disorders, it focuses on the benefit of responding in a classroom setting. The abstract specifically states, “Results indicated that when the teacher increased the rates of opportunities to respond, the student’s on-task behavior and correct responses increased”(267).

The study was conducted in a 5th grade science class to test an intervention on disruptive behavior. One student in the class, identified as at-risk, was to be observed to see if OTR (opportunities to respond) had any effect on off-task, correct responses and disruptive behaviors. The child was previously identified as exhibiting internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

The intervention was consistent with what previous researchers have found, that is “teacher increases in OTR result in more time on-task, an increase in correct response, and less disruptive behavior (Barbetta, Herron, & Heward, 1993; Sterling, Barbetta, Heward, & Heron, 1997)”(268). Using this strategy may be one in a toolkit of strategies to help teachers avoid selective attention and the appearance favoritism, while reducing negative attention and increasing correct responses.

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Koepke, M. F., & Harkins, D. A. (2008). Conflict in the Classroom: Gender Differences in the Teacher-Child Relationship. *Early Education and Development 19*(6), 843-864. doi: 10.1080/10409280802516108

Massachusetts’ Suffolk University Psychology Department researchers, Koepke and Harkins, have written a peer-reviewed article that supports previously written articles claiming that there is a difference in the way genders learn, that boys tend to have more conflict teacher-child relationships than their female counterparts and that these negative relationships can have a impact on their academic achievement; this concurs with prior research by “Carrie Furrer and Ellen Skinner (2003) [that] academic engagement depended most heavily upon the child’s relatedness to teachers, the effect being most salient for boys in the later grades.

The difference with this study is that it takes place in an affluent area where “More than 63% of the community’s residents had a bachelor’s or advanced degree”(850). The authors conclude that “higher socioeconomic status may not provide insularity from inherent risk factors of disadvantaged settings and systems. Indeed, the boys in our sample encountered similar gender biases as those reported by researchers in more disadvantaged communities” (857).

The authors feel that regardless of the No Child Left Behind Act, “Boys *are* being left behind…their female counterparts. In order to address this situation, a greater understanding of the “legitimate gender differences…[for example, the preferred] learning process[es] and unique needs need to be recognized”(861). Consider the training interventions used at St. Johnsbury School in Vermont, as described in the Egan, Cobb and Anastasia article above.

Logan, S., & Johnston, R. (2009). Gender Differences in Reading Ability and Attitudes: Examining where These Differences Lie. *Journal of Research in Reading, 32*(2)*,* 199-214. doi: 10.111/j.1467-9817.2008.01389.x

Dr. Sarah Logan is a teacher and researcher out of Hull University in the United Kingdom. Dr. Logan’s co-writer on this paper, Professor Rhona Johnston, is also affiliated with Hull. Together they work in the Department of Psychology and both are members of several prestigious research or teaching societies.

This article studies the differences between gender and reading ability. The researchers claim that girls scored somewhat better in comprehension skills, but overall the differences were small. “However, only boys’ reading ability was associated with attitude to reading and school…Conclusions are made regarding the applicability of these findings to the school situation.” (Abstract Logan & Johnston, 2009, “Gender Differences in Reading”).

This research supports previous studies that boys reading ability is less than girls. It supports that “boys’ underachievement crosses both cultural and language barriers”(202). The study reaffirms that boys and girls interact differently, that “girls are more likely to cooperate with each other and the teacher but that boys prefer independence, to work alone, and are often more competitive than girls (Daniels et al., 2001)”(202).

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The study wanted to know if there was any association between attitude towards school and reading ability and found, in fact, there was a strong association, that “boys were found to have significantly stronger correlations between attitude to school and competency beliefs, and attitude to school and perceived academic support [from teachers and peers] than girls, *p*<.01”(206). A compelling idea is that “attitudes to reading [may] have more impact on reading frequency, rather than being directly the product of reading ability”(211). Finding ways to connect to boys and improve their “perceived academic support (from teachers…could be used to promote more positive attitudes in school”(210) and result in better reading outcomes for boys.

Newberry, M., & Davis, H. A. (2008). The Role of Elementary Teachers' Conceptions of Closeness to Students on Their Differential Behaviour in the Classroom. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies, 24*(8), 1965-1985. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2008.02.015

This study looked at three Caucasian teachers from various sections of the United States to ascertain their “conceptions of closeness” to the 2nd grade students that they had taught the previous year.

This study asked the women to analyze their relationships with each of the students and to identify a feeling of closeness to each child using the proximity of circles on a line. For example, overlapping circles meant very close connection while circles with varying distances implied diminishing feelings of connectedness with the student. Not surprisingly, when the teacher felt an affinity to the student, the teacher found “that it was easier to feel close to [the] student with ‘friendly’, ‘polite’ personalities and [to] those they judged to be ‘bright’ and ‘capable’”(1976).

Often, during the interview process, these teachers like those in earlier studies were unaware of how the communication style they use and the relationship and climate they create perpetuate differential patterns of interaction (Badab, 1990; Turner et al., 1998)…[and] the role of differential behavior [resulted in] the ‘teacher’s pet phenomenon.’ …Across several studies, they found that students’ who perceive their teachers to be engaged in differential liking behaviors, such as having ‘pets,’ not only reported lower perceptions of teacher support, but also engaged in more undesirable interpersonal and academic behaviors, and decreased academic motivation (Babad 1990,1993, 1995; Babad & Ezer, 1993; Baker, 1999”(1966).

The teachers in the study discussed the students with whom the lacked closeness. They described the relationships in terms of conflict, aggression and being emotionally draining (1976). They also “reported struggling to feel close to children who they perceived as ‘quiet,’ ‘timid,’ or ‘shy.’”(1976).

This article indicates that favoritism, even when it is not labeled as such can result in some students getting better treatment than others, “to benefit the most from their teacher relationship and, in turn, get the most effective lessons from their teacher”(1979). This echoes many of the sentiments of Mr. Opoku-Amankwa’s article below.

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Opoku-Amankwa, K. (2009). “Teacher Only Calls Her Pets”: Teacher’s Selective Attention and the Invisible Life of a Diverse Classroom in Ghana. *Language and Education, 23*(3)*,* 249-262. doi: 10.1080/09500780802582539

In 2009, Mr. Opoku-Amankwa spoke at the 9th International Conference of the Association for Language Awareness in Hong Kong. His topic was English-Only Language-in-Education Policy in Ghana. According to the printed abstract, at the time of this article ,“Teacher Only Calls Her Pets”, Mr. Opoku-Amankwa was associated with the National Centre for Language and Literacy, Institute of Education, University of Reading, Reading, United Kingdom.(249)

In this peer-reviewed paper, Mr. Opoku-Amankwa observed classroom life in Ghana. Specifically he looked at teacher favoritism such as “selective attention to pupils, teacher remarks and comments, corporal punishment,…[that] help create inequality and cumulative contribute to communication failure and underachievement” (Abstract Opoku-Amankwa, 2009, “Teacher Only Calls her Pets”).

Mr. Opoku-Amankwa reports that students who are not included in classroom communication will suffer academically and socially. He refers to the teacher, as did other researchers Luke et al, as the ‘authoritative identity’ who “generally, controls the pattern, content and direction of classroom communication”(253). This is a disturbing look at a classroom where the teachers tend to be more technical than professional, because they follow the textbooks issued without creativity and little concern for students’ individual struggles or abilities. The main thrust of the author’s research was “the invisible life of the classroom…three main areas with serious implications for the educational outcomes: teachers’ selective attention, the use of corporal punishment, unequal access to learning resources”(253). For this action research project, the first and last areas will be discussed, since corporal punishment is outside the context of the project.

Selective attention, or favoritism, is vividly described in this Ghanaian classroom. “Seven of the 74 pupils are considered to be good;…according to the teacher, [they] ‘are able to read fluently and without the teacher’s intervention’(253). As Opoku-Amankwa’s observations unfold, however, this is not necessarily the case. The ‘favored’ students often get the benefit of the doubt when responding to the teacher who will expand their answer for them so it is complete; or, they may get the opportunity to hear a wrong or incomplete answer first, and then they use that information to respond with a better or complete answer, more to the teacher’s liking. In relationship to the third area above, these seven students are given the best seats in the room as well as have unlimited use and visual access to the limited textbooks in the class (253).

Conversely, the students who are classified as weak are “Only occasionally…called to participate in class activities. The teacher spends little time with them, especially when they fail to give instant and ‘correct’ answers and often makes comments such as, ‘you can’t waste our time’.

The students were keenly aware of the teacher’s actions and are able to “interpret and read meanings into teacher’s facial expressions, voice pitch, body posture and are highly sensitive to teachers’ selective attention (Bloome et al. 2005)”(255). Furthermore, “evidence that students perceive teachers…high expectations for high-achieving students,

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granting them freedom of choice and greater opportunities,…[and] low expectations for low-achieving students to whom they give more direction and negative feedback (Johnson 1995)…results, according to Williams and Snipper (1990) “in a peculiar self-fulfilling dynamic…between teacher expectations and student achievement”(255).

In Opoku-Amankwa’s research, the teachers “tended to be unaware about the implications of their acts on the pupils’ underachievement…[they] attribute pupils’ underachievement to poor parental and home support and other factors, indicating most of the children are lazy”(255).

Further, Mr. Opoku-Amankwa offers some suggestions for improving the classroom environment in Ghana, such as a “call for a critical review of teacher training and professional development and innovative ways to improve access to literacy resources…[and] provide a print-rich environment”(259-260). The author points out that while this article “is on the developing world…[it has] wider relevance…[and] is reminiscent of the situation of pupils from low-income home in the United States described by Brown (2006, 701)”(260).